Overview of Cactus (Opuntia Ficus-Indica (L):
A Myriad of Alternatives

Agholor Azikiwe Isaac

Department of Agricultural Extension and Rural Resource Management,
Faculty of Science and Agriculture, University of Mpumalanga,
Private Mail Bag XI1283, Mbombela, 1200 South Africa


ABSTRACT The paper reviewed in detail the following for Opuntia ficus-indica including the origin and varieties, the morphology, the success and the potential limitations, nutritional qualities of cactus, constituents of the seeds/fruits, storage of Opuntia fruits, consumption, nutritional qualities, health implications, mineral element composition including Crude Protein (CP), Acid Detergent Fiber in cactus (ADF), Neutral Detergent Fiber (NDF) Cellulose, Hemicellulose, Lignin, Non Fiber Carbohydrates (NFC), ether extract, minerals, phosphorus, potassium, calcium, magnesium, sodium, elemental concentration and the ecological and environmental usefulness. The paper concluded that the fortified and high-energy, nutrient-endowed cacti stands as a myriad of alternatives protecting the already ailing and depleted natural resources, providing farmers and livestock with a definite source of water during period of water stress, and serving as medicinal, food and vegetables for humans. As the intuition and consciousness of these benefits spreads, cactus-producing countries should be encouraged to improve their cultivation practices for these valuable plants of cacti.